



Empowering young women since 1927

TEPEYAC TIMES

OPPORTUNITY. UNITY. SERVICE. EXCELLENCE



Together, we tell our story.
Together, we share our mission.
Together, we rise to the challenges.

Together ¡Creemos! Friday, April 16, 2021

We Believe!
2021 Virtual
Benefit for
Scholarships

The 26th annual ¡Creemos! We Believe! Benefit for Scholarships, honoring Tricia Gutekanst with this year's ¡Creemos! award, will be held virtually, culminating with an online celebration on Friday, April 16, 2021. Throughout March and early April, join us as we share the stories of our girls, their families and our educators and reflect on the importance of a Tepeyac education during these difficult times.

This year we are thrilled to have a phenomenal keynote address from a true champion and pioneer for women and people of color, Audrey Peeples. She became associate regional director for Girl Scouts USA in 1973. Three years later, she rose to executive director of the Girl Scouts of Chicago, and held the position until September 1987. At that time, she left the Girl Scouts to become CEO of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). She sits on several prominent boards, including Tepeyac, and continues to create opportunities for women and people of color.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges for all of us, but more so for Little Village and surrounding South Side Chicago communities. **Sixty-three percent of Tepeyac families have lost jobs or experienced a reduction in hours, instigated by this health crisis.** Families who were struggling before, are in need of our assistance now more than ever. **Scholarships/financial aid has increased \$100K this year to meet the needs of our families.** Tepeyac has accompanied our girls as they struggle to overcome the new obstacles that they face. We have provided meals, groceries

and PPE over the course of the past year, all while continuing to offer a robust academic education and an emotionally supportive, mission driven network for 145 girls.

Despite these hardships, Tepeyac young women excel. Our students are engaged in the classroom and online. Our teachers are working tirelessly to ensure no student is left behind. Our school community is united. Together, we are strong in the face of adversity. We continue to support our alumnae in college, especially the Freshwomen who have started this new experience online.

Tepeyac is determined to overcome our challenges together, but we can't do it without YOU. We are asking you to join us in raising the funds to meet the needs of our families.

You can support our young women by:

- Sponsoring ¡Creemos!
- Purchasing an Ad
- Buying a Grand Raffle ticket or 6!
- Participating in the Auction or Giving Tree
- Funding a Student

ourladyoftepeyac.org/creemos

OUR UNITY IS OUR STRENGTH;

Celebrating History in the Making

Spirits were high January 20th as Tepeyac students watched the inauguration, where history was in the making as Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor gave the oath of office to Kamala Harris, our nation's first woman Vice President. All the girls were decked out in Natasha Ortiz', a junior, winning inauguration day t-shirt that includes a quote from Harris, " Our unity is our strength and diversity is our power." Many students donned pearls, blazers and Chuck Taylor Converse Gym shoes to complete their inauguration outfits.



LIST OF COLLEGES OUR STUDENTS HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED TO THUS FAR:

Benedictine University
 Bradley University
 Butler University
 City Colleges of Chicago
 Cleveland State University
 College of St. Benedict
 Concordia University Chicago
 Daemen College
 DePaul University
 DePauw University
 Dominican University
 Grand Canyon University
 Holy Cross College
 Illinois Institute of Technology
 Iowa State University
 Iowa Wesleyan University
 Lake Forest College
 Lewis University
 Lincoln College
 Loyola University Chicago
 Marquette University
 Michigan State University
 Moraine Valley Community College
 Morton College
 National Louis University
 New England College
 New York University
 Northern Illinois University
 Olivet Nazarene University
 Purdue University
 Roosevelt University
 Saint Xavier University
 Seattle University
 Southern Illinois University Carbondale
 Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
 St. Ambrose University
 St. Mary's of Notre Dame
 St. Mary's University of Minnesota
 Temple University
 Trinity Christian College
 University of Illinois at Chicago
 University of San Francisco
 University of St. Francis
 University of St. Thomas
 Valparaiso University
 Wartburg College
 Western Illinois University

Class of 2021 on Their Way!



| | | |
|---|--|---|
| 31% First in family to graduate from high school | 81% First in family to attend college | 434 Applications submitted |
| 146 Acceptance letters received so far | 100% College acceptance | 100% Of eligible students have completed the FAFSA |
| \$3.89M Earned in scholarships by the Class of 2021 (\$4.72 million in scholarships and grants) | 89 College and scholarship essays have been edited by volunteers from Big Shoulders Fund & OLPH volunteer parishioner, Amy White | 02 Verto Education Change the World International Honors Program Scholarship Recipients |

FIRST YEAR PRE-MED, Emma Looks Back and to the Journey Ahead



Emma Onate, a legacy grad class of 2020, is enjoying her first year at St. Olaf College majoring in Biology with a neuro-science concentration, a goal of attending medical school, while bonding with her fellow Posse Scholars and finding speaking up in her classes is easier due to attending an all girls, small, college prep high school.

Emma's best memories of Tepeyac focus on the small classes, collaborative classmates, attentive teachers and faith based education. She said, " Before I came to Tepeyac, being in larger classes made me feel uncomfortable speaking up and asking questions. Boys in the class always think they have the answers, but girls like to work together and help each other, never allowing competition to get in the way. I was so shy before coming to OLT, but my teachers reached out to me, actually caring and making sure I understood the material." Emma shared that in an all girls environment, your confidence grows because you are encouraged and cheered on by the larger school community.

Together, Helping

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present new challenges for all of us, here in the United States and abroad. The virus has disproportionately affected black and brown communities and our own Chicago southside neighborhoods have not been spared. Sixty-three percent of Tepeyac families have experienced a reduction in hours or have lost their jobs since March of 2020. In the spring and early summer of last year, our local neighborhood zip code of 60623 had the highest number of coronavirus cases across the state of Illinois (source: Department of Public Health).

Our Lady of Tepeyac quickly established an Emergency Fund to assist our families. To date, the Fund has raised over \$40,000. With additional support from Big Shoulders, this Fund has provided tuition assistance, helped with school fees, meals, groceries, gift cards, cleaning supplies, PPE and other basic necessities for our families. Faculty and staff played a major role in the logistics of this support, all while continuing to offer a robust academic education and an emotionally supportive, mission driven network for 145 girls.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, Tepeyac will raise \$597,000 for financial aid alone, accounting for a \$100,000 increase from last school year.



How You Can Help

- Supporting Creemos, our annual benefit that secures scholarship/tuition assistance for 95% of our girls
- Donating to the Emergency Fund to help continue OLT's efforts to provide needed food, aid and assistance where needed

Together, OLT rises to the challenge with amazing supporters like you

The Next Generation

OF BOLD TEPEYAC GIRLS!

On an early December Saturday morning, a vibrant group of 8th grade girls took their first step to becoming the next generation of empowered Tepeyac women by joining us for the Placement Test. The girls walked in ready to conquer the test, a record number had pre-registered. Despite it being a chilly start to the day, the future OLT class of 2025 filled the classrooms with their energy. We are celebrating, thrilled to welcome one of our largest incoming classes, hailing from 18 different zip codes across the Chicagoland area. These young women represent a variety of Catholic, Public and Charter schools from across the city.

In addition, this class is made up of the largest number of Legacy Scholars - close to 50% of these young women are either sisters or daughters of Tepeyac or St. Casimir grads. These families are committed to providing a transformative educational experience in an environment that values learning linked to faith, family and community. The tradition continues, making a generational commitment by sending their daughters to Tepeyac, a Catholic college prep school that empowers girls to use their strong voices to make a difference.



Again, We Welcome the Class of 2025 to the Tepeyac Community!

CLASS OF 2021 SPOTLIGHT:

Senior Chooses Career in STEM

Meet Abril Alvarez. Abril is a true example of a Tepeyac sister, defying expectations and on her way towards making our world a better place through a career in engineering.

"I've been interested in engineering since freshman year at Tepeyac. In grade school, I had never considered pursuing this field simply because I didn't believe I had the capacity. But last year in my STEM class, I talked to my teacher, Ms. Thomassen, about her experience in college, and in the STEM world. She really pushed me to break these barriers I had built. I learned that at the end of the day there's nothing stopping me from becoming an engineer but my own self-doubt. **My teacher, Ms. Stephens has also been very supportive of me exploring my options in STEM, which isn't exactly a typical first-generation Latina career, given that only 1.8% of engineers are Hispanic women. This is why I want to take this very difficult path, not only for my own benefit but to be an example for the following generations of young women like me. I want them to feel comfortable enough to explore STEM careers.**"

"In addition to my classroom teachers, one of the many ways that Tepeyac was helpful during the application process was that my College Readiness Director, Ms. Dumas, was always very accessible. She was there every time I had a question or needed help reviewing any documents or helping me contact college representatives."

Abril has been accepted to the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) as well their partner program, Verto Education. She will be a part of Verto's honors program, entitled "Change the World." Abril will spend one semester in Spain, then off to begin a research project starting in London and ending in Costa Rica. The program is based on the study and intersection of economics, identity, politics, and how combining all of these we could end many worldwide issues like homelessness, poverty, and climate change.



Abril (Left) with fellow Chicago Youth Committee board members

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